

**Washington Wine Report
2007 Barrel Tasting
Walla Walla, WA**



November 30th, December 1st, 2nd 2007

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Cover Photo by James Decker

Overview

What follows is a summary of our trip to Walla Walla, Washington for the 2007 Holiday Barrel Tasting. Holiday Barrel Tasting, always the first weekend in December, is one the main event weekends in Walla Walla wine country.

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide information about an event weekend in Washington wine country
- To help you plan a visit to Washington wine country by providing information about the wineries located there
- To provide ratings of Washington wines to help you pick out wines you will enjoy



Snow on the Blue Mountains outside Walla Walla

The report is broken down into several sections. The first, [Report Methodology](#), describes how the wineries and wines were selected and rated. The next section, the [Tasting Summary](#), provides a high level overview of the highlights of the weekend. The [Summary of Double Star Wines](#) provides a list of the wines that received double stars - our highest rating - during the tasting. Following this list, we provide individual reports of each of the wineries we visited. For each winery, we provide, where possible, information about: who owns the winery; who their winemaker is; what types of red wines they make; how many cases of wine they typically produce; and a list of Seattle stores that carry their wine or have been known to in the past. We then provide information about the wines we tasted at the winery. Finally, at the end of the report is a [References](#) section that contains a list of Washington wine resources.

Please send comments/suggestions/corrections to Sean Sullivan at spsulliv@yahoo.com. Feel free to distribute to anyone who may be interested.

We are planning a website for 2008. Look for updates.

Report Methodology

The Tasters: Sean, Lindy, Pat, Sara, Kim, Jim

How Wineries Were Selected: There are currently over eighty wineries in the Walla Walla area. It is therefore not possible to visit more than a handful of them on any given weekend. For this reason, we selected wineries on the following basis, not in this particular order:

- 1) High ratings in the Sullivan System for previous releases (see below)
- 2) High ratings in Wine Spectator for previous releases
- 3) Wineries proximity to each other

How Wineries Were Rated: Each winery is rated as a destination from one star (lowest) to four stars (highest). Please note that, in Walla Walla, not all winery locations are created equal. Locations can be grouped as follows: west of town, downtown, south of town, east of town, and the airport. Downtown wineries are, generally, wine bars. Airport wineries are typically in small, old military buildings that function as tasting rooms and production centers. Wineries elsewhere range from those with tasting rooms with vaulted ceilings in buildings surrounded by vineyards (Three Rivers) to winemaker's backyards (Yellowhawk). Given this, ratings of wineries were made relative to others in their location. To see a map of all Walla Walla winery locations, go to: <http://www.wallawallawine.com/visit/map.pdf>. Numbers identifying locations as defined by this map are listed in parentheses in the "Winery" section for each review.

How Wines Were Rated: All wines sampled were rated using the Sullivan System:

- A flawed wine. Refuse this wine if served.
- . A decent wine. Drink it if you must.
- + A good wine. Worth drinking.
- * An excellent wine. Convince a friend to buy some and share it with you.
- ** An exceptional wine. Buy it now and either tell all your friends about it or keep it very, very secret, depending on your personality and availability.

Please note this system is heavily affected by Poor Pour Syndrome (PPS). PPS occurs when too few drops of wine are poured into the glass to allow one to swirl and taste. Bouquet and taste are strongly affected due to increased oxidation. Many wineries, God bless them, combat PPS by pouring a generous taste. Those that do not do their wines a disservice.

Our interest and therefore focus is overwhelmingly on red wines. In describing wine, we try to avoid subjective descriptors as much as possible. Rather we try to detail aromas and tastes in a manner new and experienced wine drinkers can understand and appreciate.

Tasting Summary

3 days, 24 wineries, over 140 wines tasted.

Last year it was freezing fog. This year it was snow on Friday and Saturday and a wind storm on Sunday. Walla Walla never disappoints for Holiday Barrel Tasting. One would think that the inclement weather would cut down on the attendance. One would be wrong. Saturday was as busy as ever. Sunday, however, everyone had gone with the wind.

I said sometime back that 2005 would be Washington's best vintage to date. Indeed, it will be a benchmark year. Across the board the 2005 wines are strong, with the best wines reaching new heights. Was it the freeze in Walla Walla in 2004? Was it the exceptional growing season in 2005? Both? Fun questions to ponder while you enjoy a glass.

Each time I visit Walla Walla, it is a challenge to mix in new wineries with longtime favorites. In terms of the latter, [Cougar Crest](#), [Walla Walla Vintners](#), [Tamarack](#), [L'Ecole No.41](#), and [Saviah](#) continue to impress. In terms of newcomers, we visited a record number of wineries we had not visited before including a number of new wineries. These wineries were, in order visited: [Long Shadows](#), [Flying Trout](#), [Patit Creek](#), [Bergevin Lane](#), [Foundry](#), [Chateau Rollat](#), [Trust](#), and [Gramercy](#). Of these, and in fact of all the wineries we visited, relative newcomer Long Shadows was the star of the show.

[Long Shadows](#) is a venture of former [Stimson Lane](#) CEO [Allen Shoup](#). Shoup has partnered with renowned winemakers from around the world (the winery is named after the "long shadows" cast by these industry giants) with the goal of creating world class wines from Washington fruit. The results are nothing short of spectacular. Each wine produced has a unique name which is somewhat confusing at first. Chester-Kidder, named after Shoup's grandfather Charles Chester and grandmother Maggie Kidder, is a blend of cabernet, syrah, cab franc, and petit verdot. This wine is the work of Shoup and [Gilles Nicault](#), former winemaker for [Woodward Canyon](#). Sequel is a syrah from [John Duval](#) who for fifteen years made [Penfolds](#)' Grange – the benchmark for Australian shiraz. Pirouette, by [Philippe Melka](#) and [Agustin Huneus, Sr](#), whose achievements are too numerous to mention here, is a blend of cabernet, merlot, petit verdot, and syrah. Pedestal is a merlot blend from [Pomerol](#) vintner [Michel Rolland](#). These are all exceptional wines.

Of course it is not fair to compare Long Shadows to most Walla Walla wineries. This is a winery with deep pockets and access to the best people, equipment, and vineyard sources available. Most are not so fortunate but are still doing quite well for themselves.

To the wines.

Summary of Double Star Wines

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---|--|------|
| ** | Cougar Crest Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2003 | Sweet, spicy aromas. Rich, dark fruit. A little mineral on the finish. Cinnamon. 96% Cabernet; 4% Petit Verdot. | \$55 |
| ** | Cougar Crest Anniversary Cuvee 2005 | Wheat. Milk chocolate. Full, rich wine. Excellent finish that lingers on. 44% Cabernet; 38% Merlot; 18% Petit Verdot. Cougar Hills and Stellar vineyards. | \$32 |
| ** | Ensemble Release Number Two | Spicy. Dried fruits. Hints of anise and chocolate. Vanilla. | \$48 |
| ** | Ensemble Release Number Three | Dark fruit. Spice. Sweet oak aromas. Cassis. A full, rich wine with well-integrated tannins. | BS |
| ** | Five Star Merlot 2005 | Toasted. Vanilla and chocolate. Some dark fruit. Spice. A beautiful nose. This is the year of Walla Walla wine! Still young but will be an exceptionally solid wine. A good finish. 92% Merlot; 8% Cabernet. 33% Seven Hills, 47% Pepper Bridge, and 20% Pheasant Run vineyards. | \$32 |
| ** | L'Ecole No. 41 Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Beautifully integrated. Dark berries. Silky tannins. Cassis. Black cherry. 94% Cabernet; 6% Cab Franc. | \$36 |
| ** | L'Ecole No. 41 Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard 2005 | Earthy. Funky. Cocoa. Toasted. Blackberry jam. Still needs time and is a little sharp but is a heavy hitter of a wine. 56% Cabernet; 36% Merlot; 8% Cab Franc. | \$49 |
| ** | Long Shadows Chester-Kidder Red Wine Columbia Valley 2004 | Beautiful sweet spices. Anise. Blackberry. Hints of chocolate. Gorgeously balanced and opens up on the palate. A rich, dark wine. 58% Cabernet; 29% Syrah; 10% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. | \$50 |

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---|--|-----------|
| ** | Long Shadows Pedestal 2006 | Anise. Blueberry. Still a little greenness to it. Dark fruit. Dark chocolate. Silky tannins. Opens up and lingers on the mid-palate. 86% Merlot; 9% Cabernet; 3% Petit Verdot; 2% Malbec. | BS |
| ** | Long Shadows Pirouette 2006 | Toasted. Chocolate. Cocoa aftertaste. This will be a stunner of a wine. Spice. Anise. Beautifully integrated. 58% Cabernet; 19% Merlot; 13% Petit Verdot; 5% Cab Franc; 5% Syrah. To be released in 18 months. | BS |
| ** | Long Shadows Sequel 2005 | Toasted. Blueberry. Milk chocolate. Spicy plum. Hint of green pepper. This is a very big, thick, rich wine. 96% Syrah; 4% Cabernet. | \$55 |
| ** | Saviah Cellars Syrah Stillwater Creek Vineyard 2005 | Toasted. Anise. Rich blackberry. A little lavender. An excellent, even wine. Perfectly integrated tannins. | \$30 |
| ** | Saviah Cellars Syrah Stillwater Creek Vineyard 2006 | Toasted. Anise. Young still. Faint mocha powder. Berry. Full. Rich. Will be an exceptional wine. Beautiful tannins. | BS |
| ** | Spring Valley Frederick 2005 | Anise. Bittersweet chocolate. A perfectly polished and put together wine. Rich and full on the palate. Recommend decanting at least 24 hours. 54% Cabernet; 40% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc; 1% Petit Verdot. | \$50 |
| ** | Tamarack Cabernet Franc 2006 | Blackberry. Anise. Chocolate. Perfectly integrated. Light. Even. | BS |
| ** | Tamarack Merlot 2005 | Earthy. Funky. This is a beautiful wine. Blossoms on the taste. Leather. Spice. Wow! Taptiel, Weinbau, DuBrul, and Bacchus vineyards. | \$28 |

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---|---|-------|
| ** | Tamarack Syrah 2004 | Toasted. Mint. Tobacco. Chocolate. Opens up beautifully. Excellent balance. 100% Syrah. Destiny Ridge, Goose Ridge, Bacchus, Ciel du Cheval, Candy Mountain, and Wooded Island vineyards. | \$28 |
| ** | Walla Walla Vintners Cabernet Franc 2006 | Toasted. Chocolate. Spice. Raspberry. Beautifully integrated with an excellent finish. Silky tannins. Opens up beautifully. | BS |
| ** | Walla Walla Vintners Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Smoky. Chocolate. Spice. Cherries dipped in chocolate. Tobacco leaf. Very smooth. Perfectly balanced. 79% Cabernet (Dwelley, Lefore, Pepper Bridge, Sagemoor, Seven Hills, and Tokar Mill Creek vineyards); 6% Cab Franc and Merlot; 3% Carmenere, Malbec and Petit Verdot. | \$35 |
| ** | Walla Walla Vintners Malbec 2005 | Campfire. Chocolate. Excellently balanced. Full bodied. Not as true to the varietal as some. | \$30 |
| ** | Whitman Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2003 | Baking spices. Pepper. Mineral. Cherry. Explodes in the mouth. Exceptionally smooth. | \$100 |

Full report in order tasted follows.



| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Martin and Megan Clubb |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Martin Clubb |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 30,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Merlot, Cabernet, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Everywhere |

Winery: *** ½ West of town (4). L'Ecole 41's tasting room is located in a 1915 schoolhouse whose image, shown through the eyes of an elementary schooler, adorns their label. The building is surrounded by beautiful grounds with an outdoor deck space and picnic area.

Summary: This was the L'Ecole tasting I have been waiting for. One of the top producers in Walla Walla, L'Ecole consistently produces exceptional wines at what are becoming increasingly reasonable price points. However, on many occasions, especially in the summer, the wines in their tasting room have been too warm to be properly sampled. On this occasion, the temperatures were perfect and the wines were never better. As always, the salmon torte from Raphael's Catering (Pendleton, OR) is not to be missed.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| + | Merlot Columbia Valley 2005 | Rich oak aromas. Blueberry. Vanilla. Anise. Great nose. Very tannic right now. Will be a good wine but needs to settle down. 80% Merlot; 12% Cab Franc; 5% Petit Verdot; 3% Cabernet. | \$29 |
| * | Cabernet Columbia Valley 2005 | Rich spices. Boysenberry. Hints of anise. Good, integrated tannins. A nicely structured wine. Still needs some time or a little cheese. 100% Cabernet. | \$29 |
| ** | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Beautifully integrated. Dark berries. Silky tannins. Cassis. Black cherry. 94% Cabernet; 6% Cab Franc. | \$36 |

L'Ecole No. 41

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|------|
| ** | Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard 2005 | Earthy. Funky. Cocoa. Toasted. Blackberry jam. Still needs time and is a little sharp but is a heavy hitter of a wine. 56% Cabernet; 36% Merlot; 8% Cab Franc. | \$49 |
| * | Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard 2005 | Vanilla. Dark fruit. Clove. Spice. Black cherry. Anise. Bitter sweet chocolate. A little more tart than I like. 45% Cabernet; 45% Merlot; 7% Malbec; 3% Cab Franc. | \$49 |
| + | Syrah Columbia Valley 2005 | Blueberry syrup. A little smoky. Good up front, less on the mid-palate, then a good finish. 93% Syrah; 7% Grenache. | \$24 |
| * | Ferguson Commemorative Reserve 2004 | Earthy. Spicy. Jammy wine. High black fruit aromas. Anise. Black pepper. Good tannins. Still a whopper. | \$59 |
| * | Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard 2006 | Blackberry. Spice. Milk chocolate. Hints of toast. Rich and showing very well at a young age. | BS |
| + | Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard 2006 | Blackberry. Cassis. Boysenberry. Not as full bodied or as strong of a finish as the Perigee. More delicate. Less tannic. | BS |





Owner: Allen Shoup
Winemaker: Multiple
Cases: 12,000
Red Varietals: Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah blends
Tasting fee: \$8, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, Pete's, Broadway QFC

Winery: **** West of town (5). 2007 Barrel Tasting marked the first time Long Shadows was open to the general public. However, many might have gone right by it as the street name on the map is incorrect (winery is on the same road as Cougar Crest's new facility visible from the highway). Long Shadows facility is beautiful in its elegant simplicity. Stone floors and Chihuly glass sculptures are surrounded by floor to ceiling windows looking out on the surrounding desert.

Summary: See Long Shadows description in the [Tasting Summary](#). While these are not table wine prices, neither are they table wines.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---|--|-----------|
| ** | Chester-Kidder Red Wine Columbia Valley 2004 | Beautiful sweet spices. Anise. Blackberry. Hints of chocolate. Gorgeously balanced and opens up on the palate. A rich, dark wine. 58% Cabernet; 29% Syrah; 10% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. | \$50 |
| ** | Sequel 2005 | Toasted. Blueberry. Milk chocolate. Spicy plum. Hint of green pepper. This is a very big, thick, rich wine. 96% Syrah; 4% Cabernet. | \$55 |
| ** | Pirouette 2006 | Toasted. Chocolate. Cocoa aftertaste. This will be a stunner of a wine. Spice. Anise. Beautifully integrated. 58% Cabernet; 19% Merlot; 13% Petit Verdot; 5% Cab Franc; 5% Syrah. To be released in 18 months. | BS |

Long Shadows

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------|---|-----------|
| ** | Pedestal 2006 | Anise. Blueberry. Still a little greenness to it. Dark fruit. Dark chocolate. Silky tannins. Opens up and lingers on the mid-palate. 86% Merlot; 9% Cabernet; 3% Petit Verdot; 2% Malbec. | BS |
| * | Poet's Leap 2006 | Pear. A little oak. Hay. A little sweet but not overly so. | \$20 |



Chihuly sculptures at Long Shadows

Reininger Winery

www.reiningerwinery.com



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Chuck & Tracy Reininger and family |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Chuck Reininger |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 4,000 Reininger 5,500 Helix |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Carmenere, Syrah, Malbec, Sangiovese |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's, Esquin, Champion Wine Cellars, City Cellars |

Winery: *** West of town (6). Reininger's location, on the drive in to Walla Walla, offers a very pretty barrel room, an outdoor deck space, and a spacious tasting area.

Summary: Unfortunately, Reininger was preparing for their member dinner when we visited, so we did not have the relaxing experience this winery usually affords. This was compounded by [PPS](#) which made us quickly move on. A shame as Chuck Reininger makes excellent wines. Helix, his second label, is every bit as good at a better price point.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| + | Cima 2002 | Dried fruit. Sharp on the taste, especially for a 2002. A little cranberry. 56% Sangiovese; 22% Merlot; 22% Cabernet. Pepper Bridge, Ash Hollow, Spring Valley, and Seven Hills vineyards. | \$45 |
| + | Cabernet Ash Hollow Vineyard 2003 | A little floral. Nice tannins. Chocolate. Tobacco. | \$32 |
| + | Syrah Ash Hollow Vineyard 2005 | Blueberry. Classic syrah nose. A full-bodied wine. Still young. 100% Syrah. | \$41 |

Reininger Winery

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|------|
| + | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Syrupy. A little toasted. Blueberry. 100% Syrah. Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills vineyards. | \$36 |
| * | Helix Pomatia 2004 | Lavender. Hints of chocolate. Nicely balanced. Opens up. Not super complex but a very good wine. 45% Merlot; 26% Cabernet; 19% Syrah; 10% Cab Franc;. | \$20 |
| * | Helix Syrah 2005 | Smoky. Berry. Very well balanced. Smooth. 100% Syrah. Patina, Ash Hollow, Clifton Hill, and Stone Tree vineyards. | \$27 |



Snow falling
on Reininger

NO PICTURE
AVAILABLE

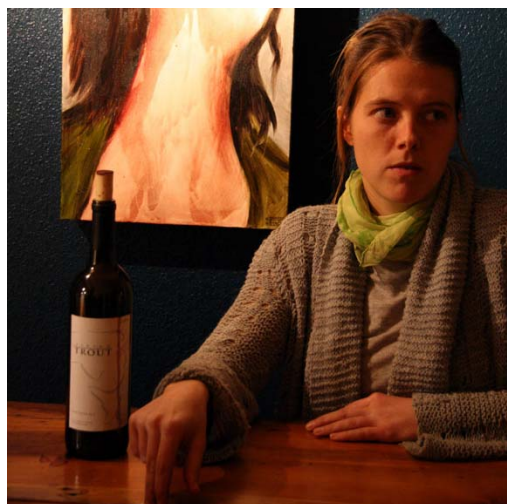
Owner: Ashley Trout
Winemaker: Ashley Trout
Cases: Unknown
Red Varietals: Syrah, Cab Franc, Blends
Tasting fee: No
Where: Winery

Winery: * ½ Downtown tasting room. Not currently listed on map.

Summary: Ashley Trout, assistant winemaker at Reininger, spends part of her year in Walla Walla and part in Mendoza, Argentina making wine for her new winery.

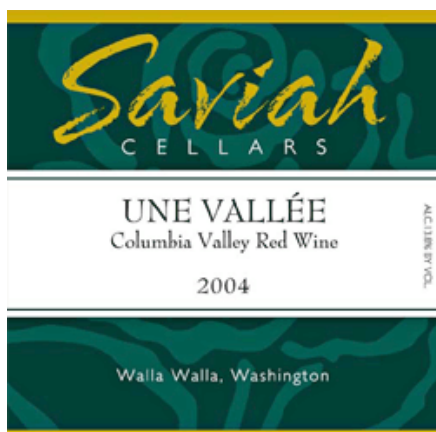
Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| + | Deep River Red Wine 2004 | Black olive. Anise. Overall a good wine. 41% Cabernet; 41% Syrah; 11% Merlot; 7% Cab Franc. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Franc 2005 | Oak on the nose. A little anise. Not as much on the body. A little black olive. Soy. 100% Pleasant Vineyard. | BS |
| . | Syrah 2005 | Nutmeg. Smooth and even on taste. A little prune. A little Band Aid. Molasses. | BS |



Flying Trout
winemaker

Photo by James
Decker



Owner: Richard Funk & Family
Winemaker: Richard Funk
Cases: 4,200
Red Varietals: Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet, Malbec
Tasting fee: No
Where: Esquin, Broadway QFC, Pete's

Winery: ** 1/2 South of town (36). Saviah Cellars – located by the Oregon border – has a straightforward tasting room featuring nice artwork and a small barrel room.

Summary: The saying goes that nice guys finish last. Not so for Richard Funk. A former environmental health specialist, Rich is not only one of the nicest people in the business, he is also making some of the best wine. Combine this with the fact that, unlike many of his peers, Rich has held his prices steady over the years, and you can understand why this winery has such a devoted following. Richard's 2005 wines are some of the best he has made. The Malbec is nothing short of spectacular.

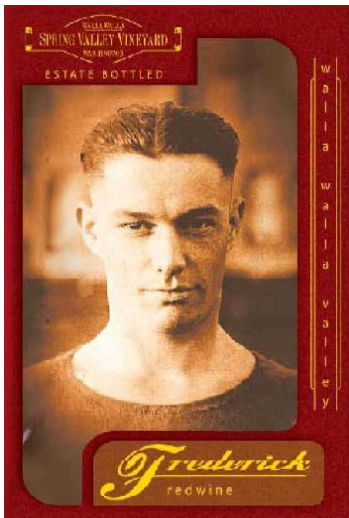
Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------|
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 | Black cherry. Chocolate. Anise. A very good wine. A little light on the mid-palate but a solid wine with a beautiful nose. Pepper Bridge, Seven Hills, and McClellan Estates vineyards. | \$28 |
| * | Malbec 2005 | Espresso. Spicy. Opens up nicely. An exceptional wine. McClellan Estates Vineyard. | \$30 |
| * | Big Sky Cuvee 2005 | Strong anise. Pepper. Lighter on the taste but with a long finish. | \$35 |
| + | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Strong anise. Black cherry. A little blackberry. A heavy wine that coats the mouth. | \$32 |

Saviah Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---|---|------|
| ** | Syrah Stillwater Creek Vineyard 2005 | Toasted. Anise. Rich blackberry. A little lavender. An excellent, even wine. Perfectly integrated tannins. | \$30 |
| * | Une Vallee 2006 | Anise. The classic Une Vallee nose. Still very young. A little green but full and well put together. | BS |
| ** | Syrah Stillwater Creek Vineyard 2006 | Toasted. Anise. Young still. Faint mocha powder. Berry. Full. Rich. Will be an exceptional wine. Beautiful tannins. | BS |



Owner: Corkrum, Derby and Elvin Families
Winemaker: Serge Laville
Cases: 3,700
Red Varietals: Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah, Blends
Tasting fee: \$8, non-refundable
Where: Pete's, Esquin, Broadway QFC, Leschi Market

Winery: ** ½ (19). Spring Valley's winemaking location on the family farm, which is easily the most beautiful location of any Walla Walla winery, was unfortunately not open for Holiday Barrel Tasting. Instead, a new downtown tasting room was on display. While beautiful compared to many downtown tasting rooms, the space is fairly small and does not compare to the drive out to the farm.

Summary: Winemaker Serge Laville makes bold wines. Unfortunately, the 2005's, which were exceptional when tasted in the barrel, have gone to sleep in the bottle. Still, when these wines wake up, they will be monsters. Give at least 6 months and/or decant for an extended period.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| * | Uriah 2006 | Blackberry. Hints of spicy oak. Very slight cassis. Smooth and velvety. A light nose overall. For the first time, wine has Malbec in the blend. | BS |
| * | Frederick 2006 | Slight dusty hints on the nose. A thick, chewy wine. Lots of structure. | BS |
| + | Muleskinner Merlot 2005 | Light spices. Cassis. Vanilla. A little herbaceous. A good, solid wine. 96% Merlot; 4% Other varietals. | \$35 |

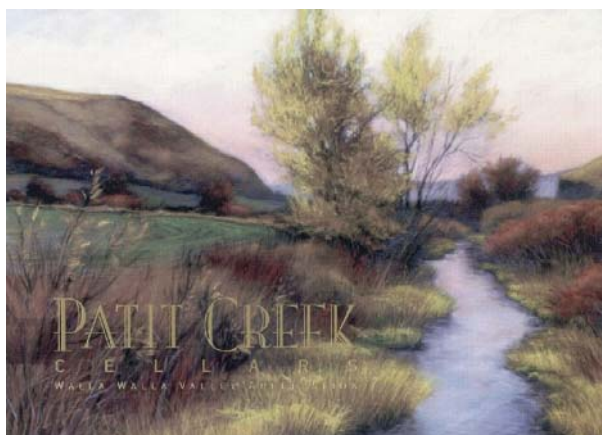
Spring Valley Vineyard

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|----------------|--|-----------|
| * | Uriah 2005 | Raspberry. Again a little dustiness. Good structure. A well integrated wine. Bright and fresh. 59% Merlot; 36% Cab Franc; 5% Petit Verdot. | \$50 |
| + | Derby 2004 | Chocolate. Strong raspberry. A light and even wine. Hints of spice. 100% Cabernet. | \$50 |
| ** | Frederick 2005 | Anise. Bittersweet chocolate. A perfectly polished and put together wine. Rich and full on the palate. Recommend decanting at least 24 hours. 54% Cabernet; 40% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc; 1% Petit Verdot. | \$50 |
| * | Nina Lee 2005 | Rich blackberry. Light anise. Hints of spice. A little chocolate. Slight dustiness on this wine too. 100% Syrah. | \$50 |

Patit Creek Cellars

www.patitcreekcellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Karen and Ed La Bonte |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Ed La Bonte |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 900 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Winery |

Winery: * ½ Downtown ([18](#)). Patit Creek is planning to move to a new airport location in 2008.

Summary: Patit Creek Cellars is a winery in transition. Karen and Ed La Bonte have recently purchased the winery and are also planning to move the winery from its current downtown location to the airport. Check back.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| + | Riesling 2007 | Apple. Pear. Fairly full. Still almost a little fizzy. | BS |
| * | Merlot Columbia Valley 2004 | Strong smoky, campfire smell. Not my style, but a very well put together wine. Good finish. | \$26 |
| . | Merlot Walla Walla Valley 2003 | Again, a little smoky. Somewhat uneven. A little sharp. A little herbaceous. | \$29 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Smoky. Good, even wine. | \$35 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2002 | Some chocolate. Smoky. Spice. A good wine. Note quite as even as the 2005. | \$35 |

Ensemble Cellars

www.ensemblecellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Craig Nelsen |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Craig Nelsen |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 380 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5 |
| <u>Where:</u> | Winery |

Winery: ** Airport winery ([52](#)).

Summary: Craig Nelsen takes a unique approach to winemaking. He takes his best barrels from three successive vintages and blends them together into one, high quality “non-vintage” wine. Nelsen’s wines are cabernet-dominated Bordeaux blends which he names sequentially (“Release Three” is in the barrel and will be released in 2008).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|--|-----------|
| ** | Release Number Three | Dark fruit. Spice. Sweet oak aromas. Cassis. A full, rich wine with well-integrated tannins. | BS |
| ** | Release Number Two | Spicy. Dried fruits. Hints of anise and chocolate. Vanilla. | \$48 |



Ensemble Cellars

Cougar Crest Winery

www.cougarcrestwinery.com



| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | David & Deborah Hansen |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Deborah Hansen |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Unknown |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Syrah, Cabernet, Merlot, Cab Franc |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's, Broadway QFC, Esquin |

Winery: ** Airport winery ([48](#)). New facility opening in February 2008 west of town.

Summary: Cougar Crest will be moving to a new facility in 2008. Thank goodness. Their tasting room on event weekends is overrun. This Barrel Tasting, I found myself in the middle of a sea of people, equally near or far, from the wine pourers and the exit. The wines were worth the effort as usual.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---|---|-----------|
| * | Dedication One Red Table Wine Non-Vintage | Wheat. Toasted. Spicy. Cranberry. A good wine and exceptional value. 30% Cabernet; 21% Merlot; 20% Syrah; 13% Petit Verdot; 8% Lemberger; 5% Malbec; 3% Cab Franc. Cougar Hills, Stellar Estate, and Snipes Road vineyards. | \$20 |
| ** | Anniversary Cuvee 2005 | Wheat. Milk chocolate. Full, rich wine. Excellent finish that lingers on. 44% Cabernet; 38% Merlot; 18% Petit Verdot. Cougar Hills and Stellar vineyards. | \$32 |
| * | Cabernet Franc 2005 | Sweet spices. Dark fruit. A little anise. Syrup. A little tart on the taste. Less full on the body but still very good. 75% Cab Franc; 20% Merlot; 5% Malbec. Cougar Hills Vineyard. | \$34 |

Cougar Crest Winery

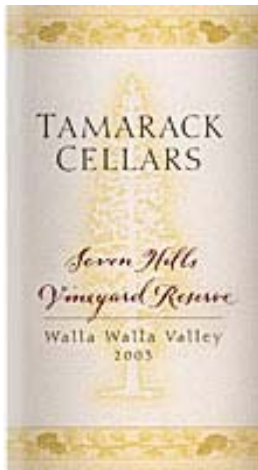
continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--|------|
| + | Merlot 2005 | Wheat. Strong, sweet chocolate. Falls apart on the taste. 90% Merlot; 10% Malbec. Cougar Hills Vineyard. | \$32 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 | Classic Cougar Crest nose. Chocolate. Spice. Good but not exceptional. 80% Cabernet; 10% Malbec; 10% Merlot. Stellar and Cougar Hills vineyards. | \$38 |
| ** | Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2003 | Sweet, spicy aromas. Rich, dark fruit. A little mineral on the finish. Cinnamon. 96% Cabernet; 4% Petit Verdot. | \$55 |
| + | Syrah 2006 | Strong syrupy aromas on the nose. A little green still. Still very young and needs to integrate. | BS |



Tamarack Cellars

www.tamarackcellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Ron and Jamie Coleman |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Ron Coleman |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 5,800 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Sangiovese, Cab Franc, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin, Pete's |

Winery: ** ½ Airport winery (54). Tamarack Cellars' tasting room is located in a restored World War II fire station. It is an open space with cement floors but offers a little more charm than many of the airport locations.

Summary: Winemaker Ron Coleman has accomplished something few in Washington have. He has created a sangiovese that is true to both the varietal and the land it comes from. Tamarack continues to impress and their current releases may be their best yet.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|---|-----------|
| * | Sangiovese 2005 | Earthy. Cranberry. Mineral tones. Tart and up front but a good light finish. Tobacco. A good wine true to its varietal. 100% Sangiovese. Candy Mountain Vineyard (Columbia Valley AVA). | \$25 |
| * | Firehouse 2005 | Chocolate. Tobacco. Cranberry. Smooth and easy drinking. Some floral notes. A very good wine for the money. A great BBQ wine. 31% Cabernet; 30% Syrah; 24% Merlot; 11% Cab Franc, 2% Sangiovese; 1% Carmenere and Malbec. | \$20 |

Tamarack Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| ** | Merlot 2005 | Earthy. Funky. This is a beautiful wine. Blossoms on the taste. Leather. Spice. Wow! Taptiel, Weinbau, DuBrul, and Bacchus vineyards. | \$28 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2004 | Plum. Dark fruit. Spice. Prune. Tart on the taste with a good finish. Heather Hill, Taptiel, Clifton, DuBrul, and Bacchus vineyards. | \$28 |
| ** | Syrah 2004 | Toasted. Mint. Tobacco. Chocolate. Opens up beautifully. Excellent balance. 100% Syrah. Destiny Ridge, Goose Ridge, Bacchus, Ciel du Cheval, Candy Mountain, and Wooded Island vineyards. | \$28 |
| * | DuBrul Reserve 2005 | Toasted. Still very tight. Spice. Good tannins. Nice acidity. 61% Cabernet; 32% Merlot; 7% Cab Franc. | \$50 |
| ** | Cabernet Franc 2006 | Blackberry. Anise. Chocolate. Perfectly integrated. Light. Even. | BS |



Five Star Cellars

www.fivestarcellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <u>Owner:</u> | David Huse |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Matt Huse |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Approx 3,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin, City Cellars, Champion Wine Cellars |

Winery: ** Airport winery ([56](#)). The winery has a nice bar-style tasting area.

Summary: Every year I think twice about coming to Five Star Cellars. It is not that their wines are bad. Quite the contrary. But there is something off-putting I find about the winery. However, each year I return and am impressed by their cabernet and merlot. This year, for the first time, Five Star will be releasing a Bordeaux blend called "Stellar." One might also call it "Spenny".

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| ** | Merlot 2005 | Toasted. Vanilla and chocolate. Some dark fruit. Spice. A beautiful nose. This is the year of Walla Walla wine! Still young but will be an exceptionally solid wine. A good finish. 92% Merlot; 8% Cabernet. 33% Seven Hills, 47% Pepper Bridge, and 20% Pheasant Run vineyards. | \$32 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 | Chocolate. Spice. Toast. A little anise. Bright acidity. Good. Up front. Less on the mid-palate. Needs more time. 90% Cabernet; 6% Merlot; 4% Cab Franc. 38% Les Collines, 21% Seven Hills, 18% Pheasant Run, 14% Heather Hill, and 9% Pepper Bridge vineyards. | \$34 |

Five Star Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|--------------|--|------|
| + | Syrah 2005 | A little green. Smoky. A good syrah nose but not my style. Chocolate. Berry. Decent body. A little blue. 100% Syrah. Les Collines and Spofford Station vineyards. | \$35 |
| + | Stellar 2005 | Mocha. Black licorice. Light and even on the taste with an excellent finish. Toasted. Lingers with a long finish. A very solid wine that is more elegant than the others. 50% Merlot; 40% Cabernet; 5% Petit Verdot; 5% Malbec. To be released in November 2008. | \$50 |



Sunset in Walla
Walla

Buty Winery

www.butywinery.com



| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Caleb Foster and Nina Buty Foster |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Caleb Foster |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Approx 3,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Malbec, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, non-refundable |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's |

Winery: * Airport winery ([58](#)). Very small room with a back room that functions as the winemaking nerve center. Just the wines ma'am.

Summary: For reasons I am not sure of, Buty's wines never show as well at the winery as they do at home. Perhaps it is the [PPS](#).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---|---|-----------|
| . | Chardonnay Conner Lee Vineyard 2006 | Apple. A little hay. Full. | \$35 |
| * | Beast Chardonnay 2006 | Mineral. Hay. Light. Great finish. | \$30 |
| - | Beast Malbec 2006 | Ripe pineapple. Rhubarb. Tart. Connor Lee Vineyard. | BS |
| + | Beast Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 Horse Heaven Hills | Tobacco. Menthol. Berry. Well structured. Slightly tight. A nice chalky taste. Phinney Hill Vineyard. | \$30 |
| * | Columbia Rediviva | Ripe fruit. Anise. Well-balanced. Spice. A good Buty nose. Needs to settle down. | BS |



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Charles Smith |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Charles Smith |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Unknown |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Syrah, Cabernet, Merlot, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's, City Cellars, Esquin, Broadway QFC |

Winery: ** East of town ([65](#)) We come to K for the atmosphere. Like we've lucked into some backstage passes to the oenophile rock show. K's winery is literally in a garage with barrels stacked to the ceiling.

Summary: K Vintners has taken the wine world by storm with their \$10 House Wine (the name on the label). The wines are always interesting. The names always curious. Unfortunately, the prices are always a little high. Worse, on this occasion, the wines were too cold due to lack of heating in the facility to be tasted properly.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| + | Holy Cow Merlot 2006 | Mocha. Even wine. A little herbaceous. Berry. | \$12 |
| + | Motor City Kitty Syrah 2005 | Jammy. Dark fruit. A good finish. Not fully integrated. | \$30 |
| - | Guido Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Toasted. Smoke. Almost Band Aid. A little untoward. Thin on taste. Very different nose but doesn't pull it off. 86% Sangiovese; 14% Syrah. | \$40 |
| + | El Jefe En Chamberlin Vineyard 2006 | Very green on nose. An almost prune-like taste. Over ripe pineapple. 75% Tempranillo; 25% Syrah. | BS |

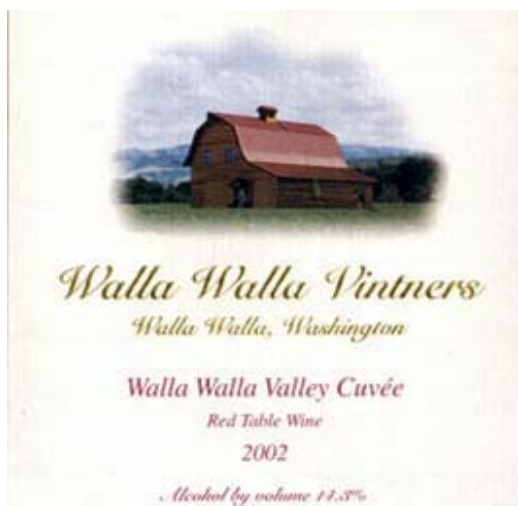
K Vintners

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| * | Roma En Chamberlin Vineyard 2006 | Ripe fruit. A little smoky. Still too young. 62% Cabernet; 38% Syrah. | BS |
| + | Ovide En Cerise Vineyard 2006 | Toasted. Oaky. Ripe fruit. 67% Cabernet; 33% Syrah. | BS |



Garagiste K
Vintners



Owner: Myles Anderson and Gordon Venneri

Winemaker: Myles Anderson and Gordon Venneri

Cases: 4,500 to 5,500

Red Varietals: Cabernet, Cab Franc, Merlot, Sangiovese, Syrah, Blends

Tasting fee: No

Where: Pete's, Leschi Market, City Cellars, Esquin

Winery: ** 1/2. East of town (68). Walla Walla Vintners' tasting room is located in an old farm building east of Walla Walla. The tasting room has cement floors (winemaking occurs in this room), and bright lighting making it somewhat less atmospheric than it could be given the pretty surroundings.

Summary: Walla Walla Vintners consistently makes some of the best wine in the valley. Unfortunately, most times we have been to their tasting room, it has been extremely busy and difficult to enjoy the experience as much as these wines deserve. Alas, success has its downfalls. Recently called "Baby Leonettis" by a local publication, Walla Walla Vintners' wines all display a distinct style marked by rich cherry and chocolate. While stylistically nothing like Leonetti, they are every bit as good.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---------------------|--|-----------|
| ** | Cabernet Franc 2006 | Toasted. Chocolate. Spice. Raspberry. Beautifully integrated with an excellent finish. Silky tannins. Opens up beautifully. | BS |
| + | Bello Rosso 2005 | Black cherry. Bright fruit. Spice. Good and balanced but doesn't quite deliver. 50% Cabernet; 50% Sangiovese. Kiona and Watkins vineyards. | \$36 |

Walla Walla Vintners

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|--|-----------|
| ** | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Smoky. Chocolate. Spice. Cherries dipped in chocolate. Tobacco leaf. Very smooth. Perfectly balanced. 79% Cabernet (Dwellely, Lefore, Pepper Bridge, Sagemoor, Seven Hills, and Tokar Mill Creek vineyards); 6% Cab Franc and Merlot; 3% Carmenere, Malbec and Petit Verdot. | \$35 |
| + | Cuvee Washington State 2005 | Chocolate covered cherries. Hints of campfire. Sweet tobacco. Molasses. 40% Merlot; 18% Cabernet; 18% Cab Franc; 9% Syrah; 6% Malbec; 3% Carmenere; 3% Petit Verdot; 3% Sangiovese. | \$28 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Sagemoor Vineyard 2005 | Bright cherry. Chocolate. Tart. Good tannins. A very good wine. | \$40 |
| ** | Malbec 2005 | Campfire. Chocolate. Excellently balanced. Full bodied. Not as true to the varietal as some. | \$30 |
| + | Syrah Morrison Lane Vineyard 2005 | Wheat. Chocolate. Cherry. Not as full-bodied. Tart. Long finish. | \$32 |



Photo by James Decker

Bergevin Lane Vineyards

www.bergevinlane.com



| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Annette Bergevin & Amber Lane |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Steffan Jorgensen |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 9,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5 |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's, Esquin |

Winery: ** ½ Slightly south of downtown (28).

Summary: Annette Bergevin and Amber Lane co-founded Bergevin Lane with Annette's father Gary Bergevin in 2001. The Calico Red is their table wine. The Intuition, not tasted here, their flagship reserve.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---|---|-----------|
| * | Francisca's Estate Syrah 2006 | Very smoky. A little bacon. Perhaps a little soapy. A very good, even, rich wine. Impressive for its young age. An excellent syrah. | BS |
| * | Syrah Reserve 2005 | A little green pepper. A dark wine. A little toasted. Almost smoky. Spicy. Cured meat. Dark berries. | \$45 |
| . | Merlot Columbia Valley 2004 | Campfire. A little thin on the taste but with a good nose. Blackberry. Too sharp on the taste. 100% Merlot. | \$25 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2004 | Black currant. Light spices. Hints of smoke, vanilla. 75% Cabernet; 25% Merlot. | \$20 |

Bergevin Lane Vineyards

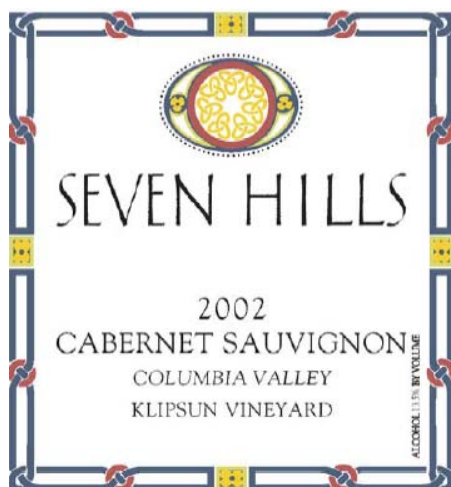
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| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| * | Calico Red | Very smoky. All wines have a distinctly smoky aroma. Spicy. Full-bodied taste. Rich. A very good wine. 38% Cabernet; 35% Syrah; 25% Merlot; 1% Zinfandel; 1% Cab Franc. | \$19 |
| . | Ouix Deux Syrah 2004 | Sharp on taste. Blueberry. Smoky. Classic Walla Walla syrah nose. 89% Syrah; 11% Viognier. | \$30 |
| + | Syrah Columbia Valley 2004 | Smoky. Fresh cut vegetables. A full wine that coats the mouth. A little wheat. 99% Syrah; 1% Zinfandel. | \$25 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Alder Ridge Vineyard 2004 | Mineral notes. Stone. Chocolate on finish. A good, straightforward wine. 78% Cabernet; 16% Merlot; 3% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. | \$30 |



Seven Hills Winery

www.sevenhillswinery.com



| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | McClellan and Hendricks families |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Casey McClellan |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Approx 10,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin, Pete's |

Winery: *** Downtown winery (16). Of the downtown tasting rooms, Seven Hills is by far the most charming. Located in a 1904 lumber-planing mill, the winery boasts the same spaciousness and gorgeous floorboards of the Whitehouse-Crawford restaurant it is attached to. A walk downstairs takes you to their barrel storage area.

Summary: With over twenty years in the valley, few winemakers and wineries have the history in Walla Walla that Casey McClellan and Seven Hills do. Seven Hills consistently offers high quality wines at reasonable prices.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|--|-----------|
| + | Merlot Seven Hills Vineyard 2005 | Bright black cherry. Some dried fruit. Sweet spices. A medium-bodied wine. 90% Merlot; 10% Cabernet. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Klipsun Vineyard 2004 | Cranberry. Berry. Leather. Light spices. Some floral notes. A wine with gripping tannins. 86% Cabernet; 14% Merlot. | \$30 |
| * | Ciel du Cheval 2005 | Spice. Leather. Floral notes. Almost a mineral taste. Rose hips. Very young still. 45% Cabernet; 40% Merlot; 10% Petit Verdot; 5% Cab Franc. | \$30 |
| . | Syrah 2005 | Strong cherry pie with tart blackberries. Gamey. Not a big fan of the nose. Medium-bodied. 91% Syrah; 9% Merlot. | \$28 |

Seven Hills Winery

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---|---|-----------------|
| * | Tempranillo 2005 | Leather. Spice. A little chocolate. Interesting nose. A smooth, well-balanced wine. 100% Tempranillo. | \$28 |
| . | Carmenere 2006 | Very young wine. Gamey. Light on the palate. Not much of a finish. | BS |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Klipsun Vineyard 2003 | Spice. Dried fruit and cranberries. Dried plum. Slight earthiness. Medium to full-bodied. Evenly balanced. Will age well. 82% Cabernet; 18% Merlot. | \$30 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Klipsun Vineyard 2005 | Rose hips. Spice. Floral notes. Dried fruit. Very even, polished wine. 90% Cabernet; 10% Merlot. | \$30 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Klipsun Vineyard 1999 | Dried fruit. Black cherry. Spice. Great nose. A light dustiness. Cassis. Lots of structure and still lots of tannins throughout. 100% Cabernet. Only available in magnum. | \$110 1500ml |



Wind blowing the sign
outside Seven Hills



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Owner:</u> | John Edwards, Larry and Sally Thomason |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Steve Lessard |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 8,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Syrah, Cabernet, Merlot, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Pete's, Esquin |

Winery: ** ½ Downtown winery ([11](#)). Winery has a bar-style tasting room as well as a large barrel area utilized for tastings on event weekends.

Summary: Whitman was started in 1998 by John Edwards and Larry and Sally Thomason. Almost ten years in, they are making some of the best wine in the state with the help of winemaker Steve Lessard. The Narcissa, a peppery Bordeaux-blend, and their cabernet are consistent standouts. The Killer Cab, their table wine, has unfortunately recently gone from the low teens to the high teens.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| * | Narcissa 2003 | Black pepper. Earthy. A little wheat. A little tart. A full-bodied wine. | \$24 |
| * | Merlot 2003 | Spicy. Dried fruit. A little baker's chocolate. Tobacco. An excellent finish. 76% Merlot; 22% Cabernet; 2% Cab Franc. | \$32 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2003 | Tobacco. A little chocolate. Dark fruit. Spice. A good wine that opens up. | \$36 |
| ** | Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2003 | Baking spices. Pepper. Mineral. Cherry. Explodes in the mouth. Exceptionally smooth. | \$100 |

Whitman Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| . | Syrah 2003 | Smoke. Wheat. Berry. Good nose. Don't like the taste as much. | \$30 |
| + | Narcissa 2004 | Toast. Earthy. Spice. Black cherry. Good mid-palate. Finish ends a little early. | \$24 |
| * | Del Rio 2004 | White pepper. Spicy. Huge nose. A little wheat. Opens up in the mouth. A exceptional wine. Drinking the best of those tasted. 50% Merlot; 50% Cabernet. | \$26 |
| + | Merlot Columbia Valley 2004 | Chocolate. Spice. Thinner on the taste without as much of a finish. A little cranberry on the nose. | \$32 |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2004 | Black pepper. Chocolate. A good nose. Very smooth, even wine. Smooth tannins. | \$36 |
| + | Viognier Cougar Hills Vineyard 2007 | Citrus. Lemon. Good. Not heavy. Lightens up on the finish. | BS |
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon Windrow Vineyard 2006 | A little green still. Black pepper. Wheat. Tobacco. Anise. Molasses. A thick, full-bodied wine. Will be excellent. | BS |
| + | Syrah 2006 | Classic syrah nose. Smoky. Spicy. Gamey. Not my style but very well made. | BS |

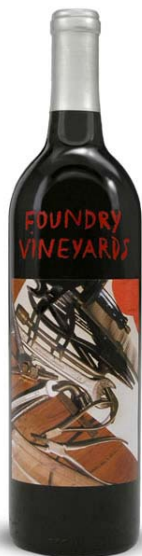


Sean with Whitman Cellars owner John Edwards

Photo by James Decker

Foundry Vineyards

www.wallawallafoundry.com



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Mark Andersen |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Mark Andersen |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 500 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Merlot, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin |

Winery: ** ½ South of Downtown ([14](#)). Foundry Vineyards has a beautiful, modern looking tasting room. To complement the elegant setting, they have added artwork from Squire Bruel perfectly suited to the building.

Summary: While Foundry is a new winery with limited production, they are worth keeping your eye out for.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| * | Merlot 2006 | A little dustiness. A fairly light nose. Rich on the taste. Hints of chocolate. Good finish. | BS |
| . | Cabernet Sauvignon 2003 | Canned green beans. Off-putting nose. A good taste. A little vanilla. | \$30 |
| + | Artisan Blend 2005 | Spice. Vanilla. Chocolate. Nice, full wine. A little tart. Overall, well-put together. 100% Cabernet. Stone Marker, LaTour, and Dwelley vineyards. | \$36 |

Foundry Vineyards

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---------------|---|------|
| * | Red Wine 2005 | Spicy plum. Very well integrated and even wine. 60% Cabernet; 40% Merlot. | \$18 |



Trust Winery

www.trustcellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Steve Brooks |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Steve Brooks |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 800 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Syrah |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5 |
| <u>Where:</u> | Winery |

Winery: South of downtown. Not currently listed on map.

Summary: Trust is a new winery from Steve Brooks, whose previous career was working for CNN. Steve has clearly moved on and up. 2005 was his first vintage and the wines show promise.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| * | Trust Syrah Lewis Vineyard 2006 | Smoky. Berry. Good syrah nose. Hints of chocolate on taste with a great finish. | BS |
| + | Trust Syrah 2005 | Chocolate. Mineral. Berry. A little gamey. | \$28 |
| + | Trust Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 | Spices. Anise. Cranberry on taste. Not a big wine but good. | \$36 |



Trust and
Chateau Rollat

Chateau Rollat

www.rollat.com

NO PICTURE
AVAILABLE

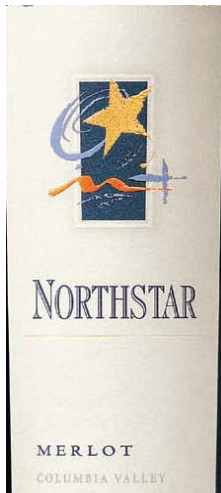
| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Bowin Lindgren |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Christian LeSommer, consulting; Steve Brooks |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Unknown |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5 |
| <u>Where:</u> | McCarthy & Schiering |

Winery: ** South of Downtown. Not currently listed on map. Chateau Rollat shares a facility with Trust Winery.

Summary: Chateau Rollat's (pronounced roll-ah) wines are spendy, especially for a new winery. However, they are sourcing grapes from top area wineries and have a renowned consulting winemaker - Christian LeSommer, whose resume includes a decade as winemaster at Chateau LaTour. The results are impressive. The winery is named after the owner Bowin Lindgren's great grandfather, Edouard Rollat.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---|--|-----------|
| * | Chateau Rollat Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Light nose. A little smoky. Very well put together. An excellent wine. | BS |
| * | Chateau Rollat Cabernet Sauvignon | Chocolate. Light spices. A light bodied wine. 80% Cabernet (Pepper Bridge); 15% Merlot (Pepper Bridge); 5% Cab Franc (Seven Hills). | \$38 |
| * | Chateau Rollat Edouard 2005 | A little toasted. Good. Even. Light nose. A little chocolate. A good, well-balanced wine. Hints of pepper. 75% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc. | \$62 |



| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Ste. Michelle Wine Estates |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Northstar winemakers and Jed Steele |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Unknown |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Merlot, Cabernet, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$8, refundable with purchase |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin, Pete's |

Winery: **** South of town ([40](#)). Northstar boasts a beautiful facility in a shockingly beautiful location.

Summary: So, my associate and I go to a Northstar wine tasting. The purpose of the tasting is a comparison between Northstar's flagship wine and the Bordeaux First Growths they were made in homage to. In a secret poll of the tasters, the Northstar wine consistently comes out ahead of wines ten times its price. It is no wonder. While an excellent wine, Northstar's merlot does not compare to its cousins in terms of terroir or complexity. Moreover, its fruit-forward New World style makes it a dead ringer for a U.S. audience. Perform this same test in France and you will assuredly, correctly, get a different response. Alas, that is just the marketers talking. While not Bordeaux, Northstar makes quality wine.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|
| + | Stella Blanc Semillon Columbia Valley 2005 | Clear in color. A little hay. Good, full taste. A little thicker on the palate. | \$20 |
| + | Stella Maris Columbia Valley Red Blend 2003 | White pepper. Tar. Spicy plum. A little dusty. A nice wine that opens up on the palate. 47% Cabernet; 45% Merlot; 4% Malbec; 4% Syrah. | \$29 |
| + | Syrah Columbia Valley 2003 | Smoky. Green. Rich nose. A little bacon. Cured meat. Clove. A decent taste. 100% Syrah. 71% Minnick Hills and 29% Goose Ridge vineyards. | \$40 |

Northstar Winery

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---|--|------|
| * | Petit Verdot Columbia Valley 2005 | Strong spicy plum. Nutmeg. Chocolate. Smooth and even. Light on the finish. 78% Petit Verdot; 12% Cabernet; 10% Merlot. | \$40 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2003 | Canned vegetables. Dusty. Anise. Full. Nice structure. Jammy. Black currant. A lip smacking wine. 77% Cabernet; 18% Merlot; 5% Petit Verdot. | \$60 |
| * | Cabernet Franc Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Tobacco. Maple. A little cassis. A nice wine with a long, lingering finish. Chocolate. 88% Cab Franc (Minnick); 6 Merlot (Anna Marie); 6% Petit Verdot (Stone Tree). | \$40 |
| * | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Cola. Cured ham. Nicely balanced wine. Not my style but a good wine. | \$40 |
| * | Anna Marie Merlot 2006 | Spicy plum. Dark fruit. Excellently integrated tannins. Expected to be blended. | BS |



Va Piano Vineyards

www.vapianovineyards.com



| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Justin and Liz Wylie |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Justin Wylie |
| <u>Cases:</u> | Approx 1,500 |
| <u>Red varietals:</u> | Cabernet, Syrah, Blends |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | \$5 |
| <u>Where:</u> | Leschi Market, Esquin, Pete's |

Winery: *** ½ South of town (38). Take the turn in to Va Piano Vineyards and suddenly you are transported several thousand miles south to Napa. The rolling hills of vineyards. A winding road through them. A beautiful building at the end with a small, charming tasting room inside. This is what you want a visit to a winery to be. And the wines don't disappoint.

Summary: Va Piano's motto is "Chi va piano, va sano e va lantano" which means "He who goes slowly, goes safely, and goes far." Whether they are going slowly I cannot say, but clearly they are going far. Va Piano is adding increasing amounts of their estate grapes to their blends. Look for single vineyard wines down the road.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| + | Syrah 2006 | Vanilla. Still green. Berry. Drinking well. 100% Syrah. Ranch at the End of the Road, Porteus, Lewis, Minnick, and Va Piano Estate vineyards. | BS |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Vanilla. Fig. Nice, even wine. Not overly tannic. 100% Cabernet. Klipsun, Porteus, Phinney Hill, Seven Hills, Va Piano Estate vineyards. | BS |
| + | Bruno's Blend III | A good, straight-forward wine. Wheat cereal. Good nose. Light smokiness. A little short on the finish. 66% Syrah; 20% Cabernet; 14% Merlot. | \$23 |

Va Piano Vineyards

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|------|
| * | Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 | Good, soft tannins. A full wine. Rich. Black currant. Dark fruit. 93% Cabernet; 7% Merlot. Va Piano Estates, Seven Hills, and Pepper Bridge vineyards. | \$38 |
| * | Syrah 2005 | A full wine. Puckering. Spice. Tobacco. Gamey. Good, but not my style. 100% Syrah. Lewis, Porteus, Ranch at the End of the Road, Va Piano Estates vineyards. | \$38 |

Gramercy Cellars

www.gramercycellars.com



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Greg Harrington |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Greg Harrington |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 3,500 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Syrah |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin |

Winery: *** (37) Gramercy shares Waters' new facility.

Summary: Master Sommelier Greg Harrington is creating wines with great promise. Gramercy has been increasing production over the last few years. This will be a winery to keep an eye on. NB: Demerits for the flash on the website.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| * | Lagniappe Syrah Columbia Valley 2005 | Smoky. Dark fruit. Excellent, evenly balanced taste. 97% Syrah; 3% Viognier. Forgotten Hills and Minnick vineyards. | \$32 |
| * | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Gamey. Smoked meat. Red currant. Excellently balanced. 98% Les Collines, 2% Minnick vineyards. | \$40 |
| . | Tempranillo 2006 | Bright, ripe fruit. Almost pineapple. A surprising taste, totally disconnected from the nose. An understated wine. | BS |

Waters Winery

www.waterswinery.com



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Jason Huntley & James Brown |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | James Brown |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 4,000 |
| <u>Red Varietals:</u> | Syrah, Cabernet |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Esquin |

Winery: *** (37) South of downtown. Boasts beautiful views and an excellent winemaking facility.

Summary: Winemaker James Brown and co-owner Jason Huntley have made a major investment in this winery, building a brand new facility south of downtown. Waters 2005 wines focused on single vineyard syrahs. As when they were tasted in the barrel the results were mixed.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| . | Interlude Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Ripe banana. Anise. Mineral. A little uneven on the taste. | \$25 |
| - | Syrah Loess Vineyard 2005 | Smells green and off on the nose. Green beans. Mineral. Anise. Okay on the taste. | \$40 |
| . | Syrah Forgotten Hills Vineyard 2005 | Mustard seed. Gamey. | \$40 |
| + | Syrah Pepper Bridge Vineyard 2005 | Pepper and anise. A good wine that opens up on the palate. A little blackberry. | \$40 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 | Mustard seed. Stems. Good taste with an excellent mid-palate but a little off-putting on the nose. | \$40 |

Waters Winery

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|----|
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Ripe banana. More evenly balanced than the others. Good tannins. Well put together. | BS |



Waters new
facility south of
town

References

Select Seattle-Area Wine Stores

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Seattle Address</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Website</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Esquin | 2700 4 th Ave S | 682.7374 | www.esquin.com |
| City Cellars | 710 N 45th St | 632-7238 | www.citycellar.com |
| Seattle Cellars | 2505 2nd Ave | 25.0850 | www.seattlecellars.com |
| McCarthy & Schiering | 2401 B Queen Anne Ave N | 282-8500 | www.mccarthyandschiering.com |
| Pete's Supermarket | 58 E. Lynn | 322-2660 | www.petes.cc |
| Madison Park Cellars | 4227 E. Madison | 323-9333 | |
| Champion Wine Cellars | 108 Denny Way | 284-8306 | www.championwinecellars.com |

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www.compasswines.com

Walla Walla Resources

www.wallawallawine.com
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www.wallawalla.org
www.vineatrust.org